

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner Heckenberg during the personal interview held September 7, 2006, are gratefully appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

Applicants' gratefully appreciate the indication that claim 9 contains allowable subject matter.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3-8, 10-16 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Ito (JP 11-105039); claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ito; and claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ito in view of Atake (U.S. Patent No. 5,945,059). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

In particular, as agreed during the personal interview, none of the applied references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest a coated mold insert that includes a mold insert, an electroless nickel layer formed over the mold insert, and a layer of chromium nitride formed over the electroless nickel layer, wherein the mold insert comprises a through opening that extends from one end of the insert to an opposite end of the insert, as recited in independent claim 1. Support for this feature can be found in the drawings at, for example, Fig. 5, which clearly shows a through opening through which a magnetic roll 68 can be inserted, and in the specification at, for example, paragraph [0025].

For at least these reasons, independent claim 1, and its dependent claims, are patentable over the applied references. Thus, withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1 and 3-19 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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